

From: Chris
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/9/02 2:08pm
Subject: Wrestling the 800-pound gorilla from Redmond

Good Afternoon,

As a person working in the technology field, it is practically impossible to go a day without hearing something about the battle currently raging in DC. Before today I resigned myself to be a casual observer. That was until I felt the time was approaching when you would have to weigh in with a decision. I would like to commend you on a valiant effort. Microsoft, I'm sure, was a surprise. They didn't appear to be as cunning or underhanded as the Bells, but certainly held their own. Mostly because our government was not ready to deal with a monopoly in such a new industry. An industry which is still growing. Next, let me say that public opinion is not good right now. Had the 9 states not protested, there would certainly have been a backlash. Which brings me to my point. I cannot even begin to imagine the amount of information you have to sift through on a daily basis, so I thought I would summarize what the tech community sees as the issues, and what it ignores:

First, The Browser War is Dead!...and has been for some time. We have all moved on. I realize that it was at the core of the anti-trust suit, but it does not need to be part of the settlement. I, like many others have been running alternative browsers on Windows for years. In fact, this letter is being written in Opera, which easily matches if not surpasses IE in all respects.

Second, OEM is where we should be focusing. Microsoft has such a strangle hold on consumers because PC manufacturers are forced to build either Windows only machines, or Windows free machines. A move to curtail their OEM agreement would be a big step in the right direction.

Finally, Who has really been hurt? The public?....sure, but more than that, the competition. Why not repay them. Strip some cash from Microsoft and distribute it to the three major Linux Distributions, to Netscape, to Opera, to Apple, to anyone who can prove they have felt a negative impact in business. Provide money for advertising new, non-Microsoft technology. Whatever you do....DO NOT allow them to donate Windows PCs to schools. I'm sure you also see this as a win/win for Microsoft as well as we do. Cash, however, would be great. Keep in mind that most Linux users are running the OS on machines 5 years or older. The OS is free, and the machines to run it can be collected for pennies at local charities. A much better deal for all concerned.

All we want is a level playing field. As much as Microsoft threatens the stifling of innovation, you must stand firm. Everyone knows their products have flaws, major ones, in some cases. Yet they remain in power. Ask yourselves what measures can we put in place that would put Microsoft back under the control of the market rather than vise versa.

The public must regain it's will to choose. Treat this like the tobacco settlement. The public is certainly addicted to a product that causes harm.

I hope this helps.
Thanks for your time,
Chris Gregan
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